

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 COME-00 L-03 TRSE-00 STR-04

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 NSC-05 /059 W

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R 230330Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5130

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD SN

SUBJECT: PIRACY OF SOUND RECORDINGS

REF: (A) STATE 45479, (B) SINGAPORE 1041

1. SUMMARY. GOS HAS NOT YET RESPONDED TO VARIOUS, INCLUDING USG, REPRESENTATIONS ON SUBJECT OF PIRATED SOUND RECORDINGS. AFTER CONSULTING WITH OTHER INTERESTED LOCAL DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS, EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT US SHOULD CONTINUE TO PRESS ITS CASE AND PROPOSES NEXT STEPS WHICH WOULD BE IN CONCERT WITH ACTIONS PLANNED BY OTHER CONCERNED COUNTRIES. REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN ABSENCE OF GOS RESPONSE TO REPRESENTATION REPORTED IN REFTEL B, ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR EARLY IN APRIL AGAIN RAISED TAPE PIRACY PROBLEM WITH LEE CHIONG GIAM, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, AND LIN CHUNG YING, PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT SECRETARY, REGIONAL AND ECONOMIC DIVISION, MFA. RESPONSE OF THESE GENTLEMEN WAS NOT-COMMITTAL, LIN SAYING THAT MATTER HAD BEEN REFERRED TO COMMERCIAL CRIMES DIVISION OF INTERIOR MINISTRY "FOR INVESTIGATION". THIS UNSATISFACTORY RESPONSE WAS IDENTICAL TO THAT GIVEN BOTH DUTCH AND FRG EMBASSIES SUBSEQUENT TO PRESENTATION OF NOTES AND DISCUSSION OF SUBJECT BY DUTCH AMBASSADOR WITH GOS ATTORNEY

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GENERAL AS EARLY AS OCTOBER 1975.

3. SHORTLY AFTER EMBASSY'S REPRESENTATION TO MFA, LOCAL PRESS CARRIED SEVERAL EXTENSIVE AND WELL DOCUMENTED ARTICLES ON TAPE PIRACY PROBLEM. WE DO NOT KNOW SOURCE OF INFORMATION USED IN ARTICLES BUT ASSUME THAT TRADE CIRCLES PROVIDED DATA, INCLUDING FACT THAT SEVERAL FOREIGN EMBASSIES HAD MADE REPRESENTATIONS ON SUBJECT TO MFA. INDEED, PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER ENTERTAINED SEVERAL INQUIRIES FROM LOCAL PRESS REQUESTING INTERALIA CONFIRMATION THAT EMBASSY HAD RAISED WITH GOS. BRIEF BUT SPIRITED PUBLIC ATTENTION PAID SUBJECT CAUSED SOME, PARTICULARLY FRG EMBASSY, TO ANTICIPATE POLICE CRACKDOWN ON TAPE PEDDLERS AFTER BRIEF INTERVAL. FACT THAT PRICES OF PIRATED TAPES PLUNGED BY UPWARDS OF 50 PERCENT AT TIME OF PRESS PLAY WAS ADDUCED AS SUPPORT FOR THIS HYPOTHESIS.

4. IN ABSENCE TO DATE OF EXPECTED POLICE ACTION, FRG EMBASSY NOW FORSEES NO ACTION IN NEAR FUTURE BY GOS. BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION, WHICH HAS BEEN IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH COMMERCIAL CRIMES DIVISION, SUSPECTS THAT SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION OF PROBLEM IS BEING BLOCKED AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL, SPECIFICALLY BY INTERIOR MINISTER AND BY ATTORNEY GENERAL, ALTHOUGH REASONS FOR THEIR OPPOSITION ARE NOT CLEAR.

5. IN VIEW OF FOREGOING, ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR INVITED HIS DUTCH, UK AND FRG COLLEAGUES TO MEET WITH HIM ON APRIL 20 TO DISCUSS STATE OF PLAY AND POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS. CONSENSUS WHICH EMERGED WAS THAT WHILE SUBJECT WAS BOTH MATTER OF PRINCIPLE AS WELL AS AFFAIR OF CONSIDERABLE COMMERCIAL IMPORT, IT WAS UNCERTAIN WHETHER OUR GOVERNMENTS WERE PREPARED TO EXPEND POLITICAL OR COMMERCIAL CAPITAL IN PRESSURING SINGAPOREANS TO TAKE DESIRED ACTION AGAINST PURVEYORS OF PIRATED TAPES. HOWEVER, IT WAS CONSIDERED POSSIBLE THAT RAISING LEVEL AND INCREASING FREQUENCY OF OUR REPRESENTATIONS ON SUBJECT WITHOUT THREAT OF RETALIATORY ACTION, BUT EMPHASIZING SINGAPORE'S REPUTATION AS A TRADING NATION, COULD ULTIMATELY INDUCE GOS TO GIVE POLICE GREEN LIGHT TO ENFORCE APPLICABLE LOCAL LEGISLATION. (WE ARE, OF COURSE, UNDER NO MISAPPREHENSION AS TO LASTING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EFFECT OF ANY POLICE RAIDS WHICH MIGHT BE CARRIED OUT. THERE WILL INEVITABLY BE RECRUDESCENCE OF ACTIVITY IN ABSENCE OF PERIODIC ENFORCEMENT.) TO THIS END, DUTCH EMBASSY OFFICER)) RECOMMEND THAT HIS AMBASSADOR RAISE SUBJECT WITH FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNA. PRIOR TO FORMER'S DEPARTURE ON HOME LEAVE IN ABOUT THREE WEEKS. IN ADDITION, FRG EMBASSY OFFICER WILL SUGGEST TO HIS AMBASSADOR THAT HE RAISE MATTER WITH RAJARATNAM AT EARLY APPROPRIATE DATE TO BRITISH, BUT

HAVE TO DATE MADE
NO FORMAL REPRESENTATIONS AT ANY LEVEL,
WILL RECOMMEND TO FOREIGN OFFICE THAT, AS FIRST STEP,
A DIPLOMATIC NOTE ON SUBJECT SHOULD BE DELIVERED.

6. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT TIME HAS COME FOR US TO
RAISE THE LEVEL OF OUR REPRESENTATIONS AS WELL. SUBJECT
COULD BE RAISED WITH AMBASSADOR MONTEIRO IN WASHINGTON
ALONG SAME LINES AS IN REF A, WITH SUPPLEMENTARY FACT
THAT PREVIOUS REPRESENTATIONS ON SUBJECT HAVE NOT YET HAD
COURTESY OF ADEQUATE REPLY. AMBASSADOR COULD ALSO RAISE
SUBJECT FORMALLY WITH FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM, SUP-
PLEMENTING ORAL PRESENTATION WITH DIPLOMATIC NOTE.

7. REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS AT EARLY DATE SO THAT WE
MAY COORDINATE OUR ACTIONS WITH BRITISH, GERMANS AND DUTCH.
HOLDRIDGE

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